

August 2003 Injury Prevention Newsletter

Alaska News & Resources

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National News & Resources

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1. New Fire Safety Campaign. The Alaska State Fire Marshal joins FEMA in their campaign to raise awareness about the increased risk of fire death for young children, and to teach parents and caregivers how they can avoid the tragedy. The campaign's message emphasizes installing smoke alarms, securing lighters and matches, and developing a fire evacuation plan under the theme: "Prepare. Practice. Prevent the Unthinkable." In Alaska from 1989 through 1998, children younger than age five were three times as likely as the rest of the population to die in a residential fire; in that decade 42 children under five died in residential fires. Alaska has lost a child under five to fire every year since records have been maintained, typically 4 babies and toddlers die in residential fires every year. You can access information on this program at www.usfaparents.gov and if you need more information about preventing a fire or need assistance working on your home fire escape plan please contact your local fire department or Jodie Hettrick at the Alaska State Fire Marshal's Office at 907-269-5052

2. Carbon Monoxide Video Available. There is a new video available on carbon monoxide poisoning. Kidde, a manufacturer of carbon monoxide detectors, created this short video to help keep first responders up-to-date regarding carbon monoxide safety including: CO and its effects on the population, overview of the CO hazard, Underwriters Laboratories standards, technology review, and recommended CO response procedure. If you would like to view this video, please contact Maria Bailey at 465-4170.

3. Safer Seward Highway Needed. Governor Murkowski has directed the commissioners of Public Safety and Transportation & Public Facilities to take a close look at the stretch of Seward Highway from Potter to Hope and make recommendations on how to make it safer. Two separate accidents in the past 2 weeks have left six people dead. The Governor stated in a press release (<http://www.state.ak.us/local/03082602.htm>) "the driving public needs to know what can be done to improve the condition of the highway and its appurtenances to reduce the incidence of highway accidents."

4. Ipecac Use Ending? The American Association of Poison Control Centers and American Academy of Pediatrics are writing new guidelines, due this fall, that are expected to discourage use of ipecac in almost every poison exposure (an exception might be when a child lives hours away from hospital care). Evidence shows that ipecac doesn't actually treat poisoning well - and is being abused, sometimes fatally, by people with bulimia. What's the best advice for a suspected poisoning? Call the poison hotline: 1-800-222-1222.

5. Distracted Drivers. Almost all drivers are distracted at one time or another, concluded a study released by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (www.aaafoundation.org). Even when they knew cameras were watching, drivers in this study were caught in all manner of distracting activities, from applying eye makeup to opening and reading their mail. Thirty percent of the study subjects used cell phones while their vehicles were moving, but that was not the most common distraction; 97% leaned over to reach for something and 91% fiddled with the radio controls. Drivers were most likely to swerve when they were reaching, eating, using cell

phones, or tending to infants. In all, the study found that drivers were distracted 16% of the time their vehicles were moving.

6. Choking Warning Labels on Foods. A bill has been introduced to Congress that is intended to make the Food and Drug Administration investigate unusual food choking incidents and would require food manufacturers to label products that are high choking risks to children under age five, such as hot dogs, with safe serving instructions. The CDC statistics show that one U.S. child dies from choking on food every five days, and more than 10,000 children are taken to emergency rooms every year for food choking injuries. Children under age five do not have all their teeth to chew up food thoroughly, and have immature airways that are easily blocked. Avoid giving small children foods such as popcorn, hot dogs, grapes, and peanuts.

7. Arctic Health Website. The University of Alaska Anchorage Health Sciences Information Service and the National Library of Medicine have teamed up to create a new public website (www.arctichealth.org) to address health issues, including injury prevention, of particular concern to residents of northern regions.

8. Household Products Database. A consumer's guide that provides easy-to-understand information on the potential health effects of more than 2,000 ingredients contained in more than 4,000 products is now available from the National Institutes of Health. Check it out at <http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov>

BACK TO SCHOOL

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

October 8, 2002

Contact Karen Lawfer, 465-8632

or

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Reflectors on backpacks, coats, and boots make a difference on dark mornings!

Studies have shown that pedestrians walking along a road in dark clothing at night are first seen approximately 55 feet away, giving the driver less than one second reaction time. (Cornell University Cooperative Extension Program)

This newsletter has been compiled by the Section of Community Health & EMS (CHEMS), Alaska Division of Public Health and sent to subscribers of the AK-Prev and AHELP list-serves. It has also been sent as a 'bcc' to others in Alaska including Public Health Centers, SAFE KIDS coalitions, Native Health organizations, and regional EMS Councils and Coordinators who may be interested and active in injury prevention and health promotion. The purpose is to share resources, breaking news, training opportunities, product recalls, and opinions to help prevent injuries to Alaskans. Feedback and contributions are encouraged. Contributions can be directed to Mary Krom, (907) 269-3489, mary_krom@health.state.ak.us